

Evaluation of the Dayton's Bluff Children's Stability Project Year Two

Conducted on behalf of
Dayton's Bluff District Four Community Council

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Executive Summary:

Too often, many small, experimental programs take shape and vanish without much fanfare. None-the-less, they spark action and provide concrete assistance for tackling some of the “big” issues facing urban communities such as the shortage of affordable and decent housing and school reform. This report focuses on the work of one such program – the Dayton’s Bluff Children’s Stability Project (DBCSP). Now in its third year of operation, the DBCSP is a partnership that involves the Dayton’s Bluff District Four Community Council (DBCC), the Community Stabilization Project (CSP), the Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services (DBNHS), St. Paul Housing Information Center (HIC), Merrick Community Services (MCS) and the University of Minnesota’s Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA). The aim of the program is to assist residents in Dayton’s Bluff to find housing and to help them to stay in their present housing. This is accomplished through teaching survival skills on how to navigate a tight housing market, advocacy and referrals. The housing assistance and placement facilitated by the project further aims at providing more stable living situations for low income students who make up the majority of those attending the Dayton’s Bluff Achievement Plus Elementary School. Finally, all the different facets of the DBCSP aim to build the capacities of self-actualization that extend outward to strengthen community cohesion.

Second Year Findings:

- The effects of the DBCSP on student and neighborhood stability were inconclusive and uneven. Housing placements in rental units on one block studied spurred moves by some of the longer-term residents. On other blocks, relationships were more harmonious. Many participants enthusiastically reported improvements in their child’s sociability and achievement test scores as a result of housing stability. Finding reasonable and decent housing within the small radius of the Dayton’s Bluff school attendance zone continued to be difficult and many families left the school because they could not find housing.
- At the center of the DBCSP is the work of the Housing Assistance and Placement Network (HAPN). From January through August 31, 2001, HAPN worked with 150 families and individuals. Of that number, 68 families were placed in apartments and 21 were assisted with staying in their present living situation. Close to three-quarters of the people participating in the program are

African Americans. A disproportionate number of African Americans in the study also defined themselves as homeless, which means that at some time in the last year, they found themselves living in a temporary home—a car, a shelter or with relatives or friends.

- DBCSP walks another path than the more commonly adopted social service and therapeutic models. What these models tend to do is reduce many complex political and economic issues to individual social and psychological issues. Instead of “micro managing clients,” DBCSP takes a more active “can do” attitude and approach to community problem solving, housing issues and the education of students. Housing within this framework is not solely a “wrap around” service. Instead, housing is closely linked to community development and building relationships between issues and different members of the Dayton’s Bluff community.
- While the mission of the project is to help keep students in the Dayton's Bluff Elementary School, it became more apparent that perhaps this was not doing them any favors. Achievement test scores remained low. Mobility rates, though they were lower than the previous year's 74 percent, were still high at 53 percent. Finally, conflicting visions, approaches to education and vested interests deeply divided teachers and administrators. As the work of the DBCSP progressed, the Community Council became a vocal and visible advocate for change and accountability at DBES. The Council demonstrated a commitment to making neighborhood schools effective by increasing the time DBCSP spends at the school and participating on the Site Council.
- Many families interviewed for this evaluation stated emphatically that they preferred to keep their children in the school and remain in Dayton’s Bluff, but they had to move because there was not suitable housing. Many factors such as zoning laws and preferences for homeownership account for the scarcity of 3+-bedroom apartments. Although initiatives by the Dayton’s Bluff NHS and others make valuable contributions in remedying this situation, affordable housing with ample space, responsible landlords, acceptance of Section-8 vouchers, productive schools and supportive communities continue to be central interlocking factors in building and sustaining community and school stability. For the most mobile, a pattern of constant turnover of schools and apartments intertwined with a string of temporary jobs. Financial

strain is magnified for low-waged service workers who pay more than half of their income for rent.

- The shortage of decent housing disproportionately affects new and large families and particularly African Americans. In contrast to older residents who might find themselves “frozen” in their living situations, newcomers to Dayton’s Bluff, often without familial support networks and long term work and rental histories, experience the limited housing market more acutely. The work of DBCSP helped the DBCC to get to know new residents in the district better. It helped to bridge the distance often perceived between the new and old. The project also broadened DBCC’s traditional domain of homeowner interests and concerns.
- The tight rental market has further altered what “tenant’s rights” mean in practice. Too often requests from renters for basic things such as heat in the middle of winter or the repair of a falling ceiling or a meeting with a legal advocate have resulted in eviction notices. This can be accomplished very easily as most renters are on month-to-month leases that can be terminated at any time. Some renters who persist in making their homes a safe place to live often stand-alone, are easily “picked off” and end up homeless. A strategy that strives to build better relationships with “good” landlords and more aggressively deals with the “bad” therefore becomes critical to any successful housing program.

Project Background and Rationale:

A recent survey conducted by the US Census Bureau presented a broad picture of social health and economic prosperity for many people in the Twin Cities in the 1990s. In St. Paul, it cited a high median household income of \$45,432. There were 36 percent of people with bachelor’s degrees, relatively low housing costs and a low percentage of residents living in poverty (St. Paul Pioneer Press November 20, 2001 p. 2B). Although the majority of people in Minnesota find themselves comfortably housed, roughly another almost 20 percent per cent struggle to find and sustain permanent housing. This is substantiated by another statistic. While Minnesota has the highest homeownership rate in the United States, it also lays claim to having the smallest number of rental properties. One result of this shortage is that 6,000 residents find themselves homeless, of which 1,000 are children (St. Paul Pioneer Press November 22, 2001 p. 25A).

In this section, I focus on three elements that influence and shape the issues of housing, education and community that converge in the DBCSP. They are: the rapid demographic and socio-economic changes, changes in federal housing policies and community schools.

According to 1970 census data, residents of Dayton's Bluff identified themselves as 99.9% Caucasian and of European descent. The 2000 census data revealed that the Dayton's Bluff District was slightly more than half non-white. On closer look, this demographic change reflects the increased mobility of people both in this country and around the world. As with most urban areas, many new comers to Dayton's Bluff have come from other states and countries, primarily looking for new opportunities.

Issues connected with relocation and setting down "roots" are further compounded by changes in how the federal government dispenses assistance to low-income families. The HOPE VI initiative spurred the mobility of many families from public housing developments to scattered rental units owned by private landlords across cities. The use of Section 8 housing vouchers has become the nation's largest and most widely accepted form of government housing assistance. Proponents of the voucher system argue that they allow public assistance to mimic the dynamics of the market and enhance consumer choice. In many respects, this evaluation also investigates how families have managed in new neighborhoods under the new federal strategies for self-sufficiency as well as how longer-term residents have received these changes. What the preliminary results of this study point to are that the market driven forces have tended to support exorbitant rents, enclave tenants in certain metropolitan areas and are simply not accepted by many landlords.

With vacancy percent rates ranging from 1.3-1.5 percent for one and two bedroom units, the annual rate for apartment rental increased by 10.8 percent. In a rent sampler for the metro area, the average rent in St. Paul for a one-bedroom in 2001 was \$635; a two-bedroom was \$771 and a three-bedroom was \$1,097.

Although rents have increased over the past years, the incomes of renters who are employed in low paying service and retail jobs and/or receiving some form of public assistance have stayed the same or decreased. Add a poor or out-of-state rental history and bad credit and the odds for finding sufficient room for a medium-sized family become slim. This is further exacerbated by the short supply of three bedroom or larger units.

The designation of Dayton's Bluff Elementary School as a "community school" highlights an expansion of its educational mission to include an explicit focus on community development. In theory at least, community schools engage in

community building through direct service to adults and young people. They offer education and training to all members of the community, extend the hours that the schools are accessible to community residents and develop a curriculum rooted in studying community issues. While these are admirable ideals, DBES's history could be more accurately described by turf wars, special interests and low levels of parent and community participation.

Race and Housing Stability:

One issue that has arisen through the course of this evaluation is the relationship of "race" to poor quality housing and schools. Phrased another way, are rental units occupied by particularly African Americans less likely to be repaired and therefore more likely to remain inadequate than those occupied by Caucasians? Following this question, how do we define "inadequate"? Is there one determining quality that distinguishes this category or an accumulation of indicators?

Certainly notions of "housing quality" are overlaid with subjective value judgments that change over time. From the mid-nineteenth century to the 1930s, housing reform and policy focused on health and safety issues. Today, the American Housing Survey (AHS) sponsored by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and conducted by the US Bureau of the Census evaluates quality of housing based on a number of considerations. Their survey associates housing quality in terms of such things as heating, water and electrical systems breakdowns, physical structure and signs of maintenance, rodents, condition of the streets, whether the owner or manager is on the property and selective amenities such as garages. "Quality" is therefore more closely related to housing conditions and structures, rather than the health of the occupants.

Although their study, summarized in "The Housing Report for the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area" (1998), supports the examination of race as well as income as major independent variables in the discussion of housing, very few African Americans in St. Paul identified their housing as bad or not properly maintained as compared with renters as a whole in St. Paul and Minneapolis. In contrast, my own empirical study found housing units occupied by African Americans to be more likely in disrepair and inadequately maintained than those occupied by Caucasians. Housing stock imbalances continue to stratify District 4.

Evaluation Questions:

The evaluation questions encompass both project process and outcomes. Based on discussions with various stakeholders, this report focuses on the following questions:

- To what extent did the DBCSP keep students enrolled in the school?
 - What are the effects of the different projects in stabilizing the Dayton's Bluff school attendance zone?
 - What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Housing Assistance and Placement Network (HAPN)?
 - To what extent did the work of the DBCSP alter perceptions of the school and divisions in the community?

Survey Methodology and Justification:

The evaluation design duplicated the methods used in the first year's evaluation. As a mixed method design, it incorporated data and methodological triangulation. What this process aims for is good sample coverage that can be described, correlated and compared. In the case of the present evaluation of the DBCSP, different methods were used to obtain qualitative and quantitative data in order to understand whether the different programs of the DBCSP were effective in doing what they purported to do as well as their effects in the neighborhood. The results were correlated to understand better how different components under study intersect, contradict, support, and intertwine with a range of issues, strategies, events and situations. Empirically based on-site visits in different locations--the neighborhood of the School Attendance Zone, the Community Council office and DBES--were referenced with document and statistical analysis as well as the perceptions of various stakeholders. The multiple methods described below seek to offset biases and weaknesses through a process of cross-referencing of different information sources.

- Document analysis of HAPN program file records and monthly tally of assistance and placement
- Telephone and/or in-person survey of HAPN participants and landlords

- Document analysis of DBES student mobility records
- House-to-house survey of 4 target blocks to assess program's effects on neighborhood residents
- Data analysis of Xcel electrical service records for Dayton's Bluff, emphasizing census tracts 345, 346.01 and 317 for comparison.

The Housing Assistance and Placement Network (HAPN):

As its name suggests, the purpose of HAPN is to assist residents of Dayton's Bluff to find a place to live and to remain where they are presently living. To reduce both the scope and evaluation of this project to these general categories, however, does a disservice to the range and complexity of HAPN's day-to-day work.

The assistance HAPN provides includes:

- Building relationships with landlords
- Pre-screening tenants to determine what units, landlords and neighborhoods might be a good fit
- Helping to mediate problems with landlords and sometimes neighbors
- Negotiating application fees
- Referring families to social service agencies and Emergency Assistance to receive help paying for damage deposits and utility bills and to obtain other resources such as free furniture, clothes and appliances
- Conducting move-in inspections
- Advising prospective tenants on tips to obtain and sustain housing
- Educating tenants on keeping documentation, assisting in filling out rental applications and leases

- Being an occasional voice for the landlord to prevent further problems and to helping to negotiate leaving a unit when things are not working out
- Connecting participants with other programs such as tenant training, Legal Aid, parent's groups and block club

Mary Poe, the housing organizer for the Dayton's Bluff Community Council, with the assistance of Dayton's Bluff community organizer, John Vaughn, carried out the work of the HAPN. The activities of HAPN described above are labor intensive and emphasize building relationships based on trust. Close ties developed over four years. Each day Mary set up appointments with the landlords and matched available units and prospective tenants. She further accompanied people through all stages of the rental process – from seeing the apartment, filling out the paper work and facilitating the move-in inspections and terms of the lease agreement. As many of the people Mary engaged with are on public assistance, her work often involves negotiating with Ramsey County Human Services, the State Minnesota Family Involvement Program (MFIP), Section 8 vouchers and Emergency Assistance, which are needed for rental deposits and application fees.

Another important part of HAPN's work involves advocacy for tenants in their current housing situations. Most often this entails pressing landlords to make minimal health and safety repairs such as fixing furnaces, windows and treacherous stairways. The worst living conditions require the intervention of property code and fire inspection units. Mary contacts the community inspection units and also accompanies people to court hearings. Conditions in one building were so extreme that a local television station was called. The family with five children was forced to heat their home with the oven and the doorknob on the front door was broken preventing tenants from exiting the building. Michelle retold what happened.

The heat didn't work. I had to leave the stove on. I wasn't getting along with the landlord. No one was. That's why we called the (television) station. So people could see what he was doing. The more people who could see what kind of building people live in the better.

After the story aired on the nightly news, the family was promptly given an eviction notice. Michelle added: "We were evicted because we complained about the heat." Mary helped to relocate the family to a much larger apartment with heat and information about the landlord was turned over to the Community Stabilization Project (CSP), a partnering group with the DBCSP.

In a contrasting case, Mary referred one family to the Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services' (DBNHS) homeownership program. The Garcia family still can't believe that they own the house they presently live in based on a chance meeting with Mary Poe at the DBES. Newly arrived from California via Guatemala in November 2000, Elena met Mary one day when she went to pick up her two children at the school. Mary helped her to look for an apartment and fill out the application form. A short time later Elena had an apartment with a Latino landlord. Recalling the chain of events, Elena recalls that Mary then asked if she was looking for a house. "We have a program." This was the MURL program initiated by DBNHS to help families at the DBES to buy homes. Mary gave Elena the phone number and contact person for the program. "Mary was very interested in helping. She said, 'I'll take you over there.'" When a house became available, there was an open house. Elena remembers the exact date. "It was May 10th. When I arrived, Mary Poe was waiting and we looked at the house together. There were two other families looking at the house. I told her (Michelle, a staff person at DBNHS) that I was interested."

On June 15th, Elena received a phone call from Michelle. In an excited voice, Michelle shouted, "Elena, you qualify!" Still stumbling over the word and its meaning, Elena did not understand at first what she was talking about. By July 4th, Elena's husband, Pedro, flew in from California and they signed all the documents. Pedro recalls, "I just laughed to myself 'Sure. Oh yeah, that's my house, but I really didn't believe it. Michelle then asked: 'Do you want to move July 30th?'" Elena and Pedro, as well as their friends, family and co-workers still can't believe it. "We want to thank every one involved. We are very, very grateful with people in Dayton's Bluff." I give people Michelle's phone number. Tell them about other programs. Take a class I say." Pedro now works at the Dayton's Bluff Elementary School as a teaching assistant in the morning and after-school programs. He plans to initiate discussions about housing in the Latino family group at the school.

HAPN In-Person or Telephone Survey:

Different challenges presented themselves at each stage of this evaluation. Many of the participants do not have telephones, long-term residences or employment. A random sample of 30 names was selected using n=5. If the telephone number was not in service, family and friends were called for further information.

A telephone or in-person survey was used to probe what had happened with the participants of the project after their initial interaction with the project's primary staff person, Mary Poe. Unquestionably, there are many things that can be called upon to explain the changes that have occurred in people's lives. The

survey, however, afforded one opportunity to ask participants directly how they assessed HAPN's work in their own words. Specifically, the survey sought to find out what in HAPN's services enabled them to find and stay in their present housing; what things worked and what could be improved in the project's operation. Other questions about the quality of their present living situation, whether repairs were made in a timely manner, any survival tips they could share with others and their opinions about their landlords and the neighborhood were also posed. Finally, there was interest in finding out if people planned to stay in Dayton's Bluff and the school, if it was their choice to make. A copy of the survey used can be found in the appendix.

Another survey directed at landlords participating in the program was also conducted. A random sampling of four landlords probed their experiences with HAPN, what worked or did not and suggestions for how it might be more effective.

Direct interviews rather than a mail-in questionnaire to a larger pool was chosen because of the transience of many of the participants and a suspected lack of motivation to complete a survey and mail it in. Thus, the poor return rate of the surveys would outweigh their benefits of ease of analysis, larger sample and anonymity. Since social service providers and other institutions that can be punitive in effect subject many of the respondents to numerous interviews, issues of use of the data and confidentiality are central concerns. The interviewing process began the first week of October and was completed in November.

HAPN Sample Results:

Of the 30-person sample, 21 or 70 percent were contacted by telephone or in-person or a friend or relative verified where they were. The following two tables quantify and summarize the outcomes of the survey from the data collected.

Demographics of Sample

African American	Native American	Caucasian	Hispanic	Mixed Race	Hmong	Homeless	Totals
19	2	3	3	2	1	17	30

There are a number of observations that can be drawn from looking at the demographics of the sample. One is it calls attention to the new populations that now reside in the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood. In comparison to 1990 census data,

there are 2,000 more residents living in the district. This increase reflects a larger household size, rather than number of households.

The large numbers of African Americans participating in program can be partly explained by Mary's good "work-of-mouth" and track record for finding housing for people who fall into the category of "hard to place." She is also an African American single mother who grew up on the East Side of St. Paul. Besides her deep informal community ties, Mary has worked with many groups, including the Dayton's Bluff Elementary School and the Dayton's Bluff NHS. When the program began, the participants were 90 percent African American. Although this concentration has changed over the last year, African Americans continue to represent the majority of HAPN participants at 63 percent of the sample. Many participants attested to a greater comfort and ease working with people of similar backgrounds.

Perhaps the most striking figures in this table are the numbers of people, more than half, who described themselves as homeless when they first visited Mary. Reasons for this partly stem from the program's origins. In the initial stages of the program, close relationships were forged with the shelters and referrals from shelter staff continued. The high numbers of homeless in the sample also underscore the precarious movement between homelessness and short-term housing situations that has become commonplace for many families.

In-person or Telephone Follow-up Interview of HAPN Participants

n=5 N=30

In permanent housing 10/01 assisted or placed by HAPN	Placed or assisted & subsequently evicted	Found apartment on their own	Remain homeless/ Received no help/ Institutionalized
2-1 year 2-6 mos or less	5	5	Homeless Shelter 6 Institution 1 Place outside DB 1 Dropped 2 No follow up info 7

As with last year's findings, not surprisingly, those people who had received assistance with finding or keeping their residences were most supportive of the work of HAPN. Favorable comments included: "I hope they don't stop. We couldn't have survived." "Mary was right on top of things. Very nice person." "She located the landlord that was willing to do things. Keeps them doing the upkeep."

Other information gathered from the interviews focused on “how” things came to be and the actions taken. Sherise told a story that was echoed by three others:

I've been looking for a three or four bedroom for the last four months. The leads are not paying off and I'm staying with my cousin. My voucher (Section 8) just expired and my 180 day extension is just about to expire.

Simply put by Connie, “No one wants to do Section 8.” All of the women stated that they had “clean” records with no Unlawful Detainers (UDs). One family was forced to move from their “pretty good” apartment of five years. “The apartment failed inspection. The landlord had 30 days to fix things. Screens off windows. Paint chips--lead.” While some landlords, as in Tonya's case, replaced the chipped window sills after her children tested with high lead levels, others prefer not to deal with the inspections and other “red tape” required by HUD to qualify as a Section 8 approved unit. Tera added:

Mary was trying real hard calling people. I called her back a few times then I walked around everywhere. Looked at apartment listings. Newspapers. I finally got a place because I lied. It's a two bedroom for \$750. Too small for 4 kids. Said I only had 2 kids. I lied that's how I found a place.

Tera, like five others interviewed for this report, had children enrolled in DBES. They had to relocate both schools and neighborhood because they could not find an apartment. Three families moved to another school attendance zone on the East Side. One family who moved to another east side location continued to bring her son to DBES since she received a Ramsey County Stability subsidy. Katrina left Dayton's Bluff when the rent for her three-bedroom apartment increased from \$800 to \$916.

I liked it better at Dayton's Bluff. More trouble here (Payne-Phalen). Don't learn as much at Bruce Vento. With Von (the new principal at DBES), kids come to a mutual agreement. He talks to them. At Vento they just suspend you for hitting another kid.

For those who continue to live in the DBES Attendance Zone, some had to make hard choices. Connie explained:

I had to send one son to a detention center. Another

to a group home. Not in my home and acting stupid. Acting stupid in the neighborhood. I said 'You have to go or I'm gonna end up in a nut house.'

Mary and the HAPN helped to place Connie and also intervened to smooth over disputes with neighbors.

I always remember one thing Mary told me when I was looking at another place. It was only two bedrooms. It wasn't big enough. But you get desperate. She said if you don't think it's suitable for you, don't take it.

Connie was thankful for the program and the Ramsey County Stability subsidy.

The programs helped. I'm glad that they started. Helped families out. Parents didn't have to worry. Kids were in school everyday. Before the house was too small or don't know where we're going tonight.

Still, even as she reaped the benefits of the Ramsey County Stability Program subsidy, Connie admitted, "Landlords are asking too much money. They can raise the rent because people are subsidized." She would like to own her own home some day. Connie went to the Housing Fair sponsored by the DBCSP and is gathering information on different home buying programs. Jenny, on the other hand, was grateful to get off the Ramsey County Stability Program. She is presently on Section 8 and is trying to move to the suburbs. "Too much gossip. Too many people in your business." She, too, is taking steps toward buying her own home.

Another striking finding of the survey interviews involved employment issues. Four individuals had a string of jobs that lasted less than a year. Michelle's work history read: school food service assistant 3 months; dishwasher 2 months; inspector 4 weeks; telemarketer 6 months; hotel housekeeper 6 months. In another case, Michael's employment as a cashier at Burger King, Subway and McDonald's averaged 1 to 2 years. Most often people stated "moved" as the reason for leaving a position and "moves from another state" were common. Besides switching schools, a relocation of housing also meant finding a substitute low paying service job closer to home.

HAPN Quantitative Tally:

There is a quantitative report of HAPN's work presented to the Dayton's Bluff Board of Directors' monthly business meeting. The cumulative two-year total of families and individuals that HAPN worked with as of September 2001 was 309. Of that number, 140 were placed and 189 students were able to remain at the Dayton's Bluff Elementary School because of HAPN's intervention. Another category of information accounts for services provided to help residents stay in their current situation. Forty-two individuals and families were able to stay in their current housing. One hundred thirteen children remained in the school because of HAPN advocacy work.

Student Stability and HAPN:

Nineteen families or 63 percent of the total sample had children enrolled in the Dayton's Bluff Elementary School at some time in the 2000-1 school year. Nine families or 47 percent of the school sample remained at the time of the survey. The data from the table below was drawn from school attendance records. Data on student achievement and attendance was not available to the evaluator.

Student Stability at Dayton's Bluff Achievement Plus Elementary School

N=19

HAPN Sample at DBES	Sample Remaining 10/01	Remaining on Stab. Subsidy
19	9	4

On one level, these statistics could be interpreted to mean that stabilization was tied to subsidy use. Roughly half of the "successes," or five of those presently in permanent housing, were participants in the Ramsey County School Stability Program subsidy program at one time. One child presently lives with her father, while her mother lives in a shelter. Four families were evicted from their placed units within the past year. Five families relocated outside the school attendance zone, but on the East Side of St. Paul, because they could not find an apartment in Dayton's Bluff.

One could assess HAPN's work in terms of outcomes, but I suggest this would not allow for areas in which the program was working well such as smoothing out relationships between landlord and tenants and facilitating repairs in apartments. Four of the respondents "upgraded" to "better" housing. "Better" is

construed as a larger and better-maintained unit and a more harmonious relationship with their landlord. Furthermore, the results of those families presently in stable living situations showed: one bought a house; one left the subsidy program and upgraded their apartment and three people found their own places.

Dayton's Bluff Elementary School Mobility Data:

School mobility records were also factored to compare the HAPN students with the rest of the school population. With a new principal, feelings of optimism pervade the Dayton's Bluff Elementary School. This confidence is suggested by much lower mobility rates thus far. The numbers through October 2001 showed a turnover of 76 students out of 425 or 18 percent. Half of this mobility or 36 occurred in the first two weeks of the term, a now customary practice of late enrollment of schools throughout the Twin Cities. Drawing from the records to partially explain this late enrollment, 19 or 25 percent arrived from another state or country. Another prevalent category describes one group of students that circulate to nearby East Side schools. Since "community" schools or "walking schools" have an approximate five block radius, relocation of even a few block might mean a different school attendance zone. One last significant movement of students is to charter schools such as Success Academy and Caesar Chavez.

Results of the Landlord Survey:

Four landlords were interviewed to find out what their understanding of the program was, how they thought it was working and any suggestions for improvement. One had attended a landlord's training that was contracted by the DBCSP.

Most of the landlords thought the program worked well. They found Mary "helpful and very nice." "Mary was one of the best. She told who to rent to. She's fair to the tenants." Others appreciated her directness. As many of HAPN participants are categorized as "high risk," landlords felt they could count on Mary as a mediator before problems got to the point of eviction. "They know people are watching over them so they're more careful with what they're doing." "Keeping an eye on tenants" thus served as some sort of a security to counter what they saw as the risk involved. Another landlord responded, "Mary knows the people better than I do. Gets everything situated. Help with the deposit." They noted the work encompassed guidance with clothing and supplies as well as keeping "in touch."

The landlords interviewed all had definite ideas of what they expected from HAPN participants. Besides paying the rent on time, "they need to know how to take care of their apartments." "Clean and code," repeated another, "I'm not asking much." "It's usually a tip off if people don't own a vacuum cleaner."

One landlord had attended several training sessions organized by St. Paul Association for Responsible Landlords (SPARL), the FORCE unit, Crime Prevention, and the Multi-Housing Association. "Each one has different information. There are two or three things you pick up. Reinforce what you're doing." The SPARL training helped with tenant screening. "You also know where you can get help out there."

Results of the Door-To-Door Survey:

A house-to-house survey of four blocks was conducted in October 2001. The survey replicated last year's purposeful sample and the criteria followed how the blocks were generally perceived in the district. There was one "good" block, two "bad" and one "transitional." Another consideration in the selection was whether the DBCSP and/or the DBCC had worked with people in the vicinity. The object then of the survey was to assess the effects of the different programs in the community. Nearly every resident was interviewed for this survey – suspected drug dealers, Hmong, Latino, landlords, residents that were living in their grandfather's homes and people who arrived that week.

The two "transient" blocks did indeed have the most turnover. On the street with at least seven families at any one time involved with the Ramsey Country Stability Subsidy Program and HAPN, 37 percent of renters lived in their apartments less than one year. This was lower, however, than the 53 percent with less than one year's tenancy the year before. No new homeowners moved on the block.

On the second transient block with no "help," 59 percent of the renters had lived in their homes less than a year. This figure was considerably lower for homeowners at 20 percent, although higher than the average in Dayton's Bluff as a whole of 17 percent. The district averages came from the data supplied by Xcel Energy service (see next section). The largest number of vacant homes also distinguished this block at 5 or 12 percent. Two of the vacant houses had very extensive damages by renters. One contractor has been working on a very long-term rehab that was never completed. The bank repossessed one house for default on mortgage payments. One house was vacant for four months. Additionally, three houses had "for sale" signs posted. According to one realtor,

there were 200 sales in the area from spring into summer. Another realtor confirmed an increase of active listings in the south track--from 20 houses for sale last year to 70.

The “transitional” block had the largest percentage of homeowners living in their homes in the 10+ years category. At 56 percent of homeowners and 18 percent of renters, these figures reflected much higher long-term stability than the Dayton's Bluff averages of 35 percent for homeowners and 9 percent for renters in the category of less than a year.

In the last block surveyed, the “good” block, there are a low number of rental units and that turnover was at 50 percent. Only 7 percent of homeowners lived in their homes less than a year. Seventy-nine percent lived on the block for more than two years.

While studying numbers can give a cut-and-dry measure of movement or stability, the interviews relayed people's feelings about the neighborhood, ideas about the quality of their living and commitment to staying in the district.

Residents on one block were very vocal about the negative effects associated with too many housing placements on one street. While the stability programs helped students and families to stay at DBES, the costs to neighbors and landlords both financially and emotionally raised the question of “whose stability.” One active parent and community block club leader called the last year “rough.” In explaining further what she meant, a common list of offenses was repeated. “Lots of people in and out on cars. Constant foot and car traffic cutting through yards.” “Every Friday.” The traffic was linked to drugs and prostitution—“heaviest traffic during the first week of the month.” A second set of issues vocalized was unsupervised kids. “People don't treat their kids well.” Sometimes the words “don't care” and “not taking responsibility” are attached to “those” people, either spoken explicitly or implicitly. Another person on the block was concerned the racist implications connected with the designation of “those people.”

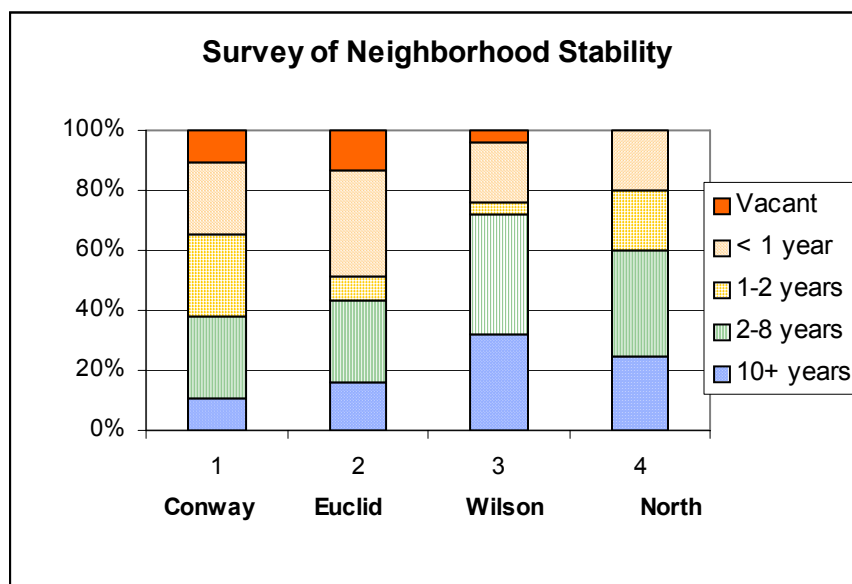
Them, them, them. They're homeowners now, but what were they before? There's too much fear and ignorance.

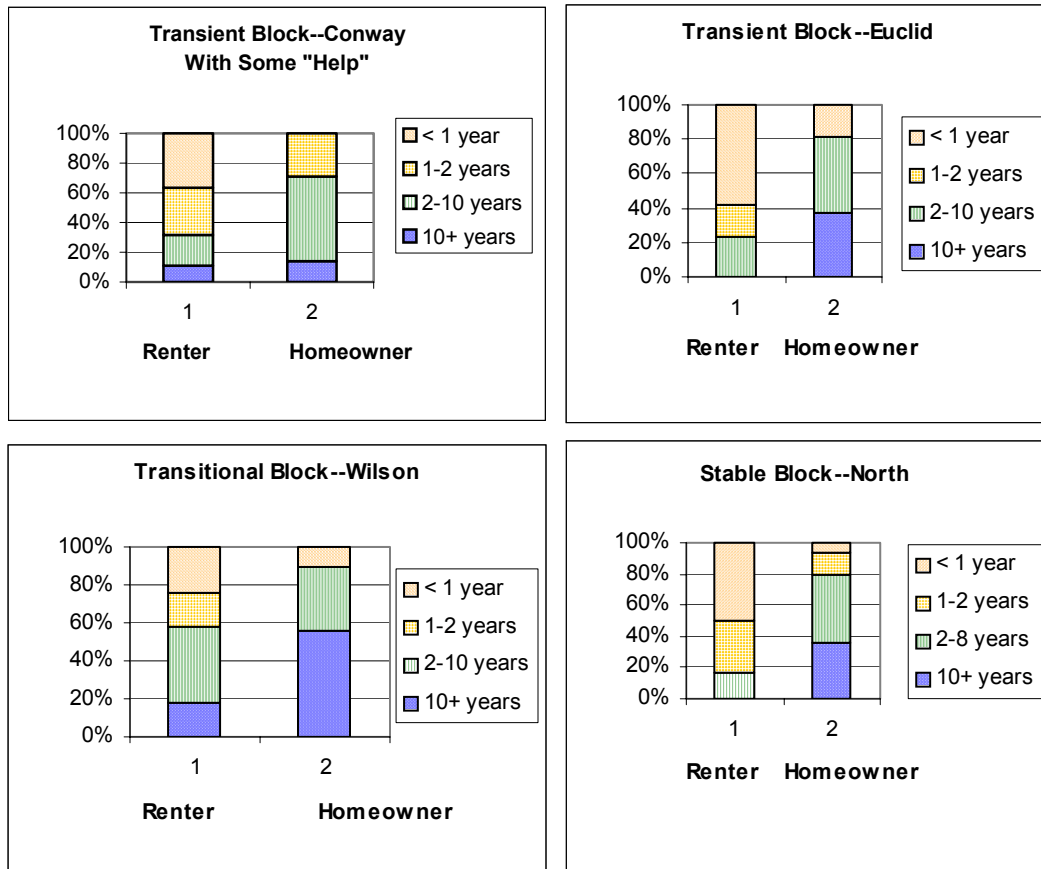
Further upset by the domestic abuse, Nora and her husband plan to move next year. “Doesn't even have the decency to beat him up in the house,” she added cynically. On this block, as well as the other one's surveyed, small clusters or individuals aggressively used the governmental channels for registering suspected illegal activities. They called code enforcement units, community

police and Legal Aid. Most were discouraged by the lack of expected action by these entities.

The perceived divides in the neighborhood between homeowners and renters and black and white have unquestionably been heightened in the last two years. Close to a mini-revolt, neighborly tensions are articulated in the language of pop psychology and social service agencies. One resident responded to her neighbor's constant "advice" concerning her "issues": "Mother f____ in my business...She's always in my business." With so many changes occurring both in people's lives and in the community, one course of action seems to be to vent frustration on your closest neighbor. There are also some different ideas of "community" as well as other "common sense" assumptions and values about how one should raise your kids and "keep up" property that are buttressed by housing codes and laws. Language barriers and some cultural differences have meant that overall dialogue with new Hmong and Latino residents has been minimal.

On the plus side, mobility also brings new energy and fresh perspectives. Many new homeowners and renters have come to Dayton's Bluff with a "no neighborhood is perfect" attitude and no history with "the way things once were." They, Hmong, Latinos, African Americans and Caucasians, voiced a long-term commitment to the community. In two of the blocks where only one family had participated in a stability program, relationships with neighbors were considerably more harmonious. One HAPN and Merrick Stability Subsidy Program participant acted as a mediator when problems arose with other residents. She had also participated in a Dispute Resolution Center mediation skill training sponsored by DBCSP.

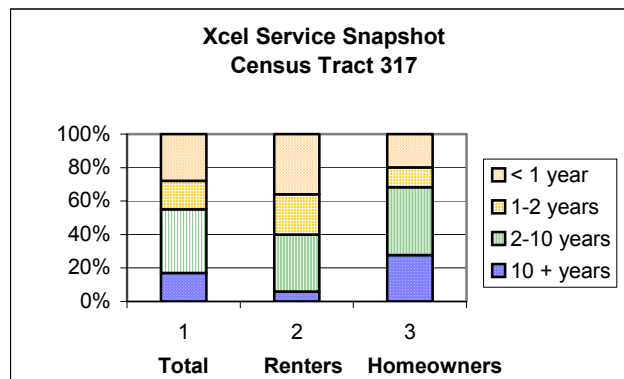
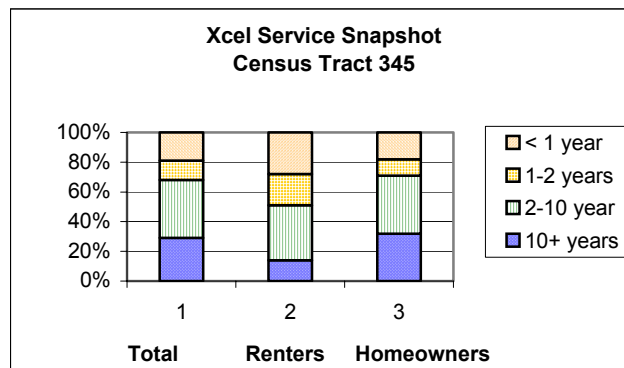
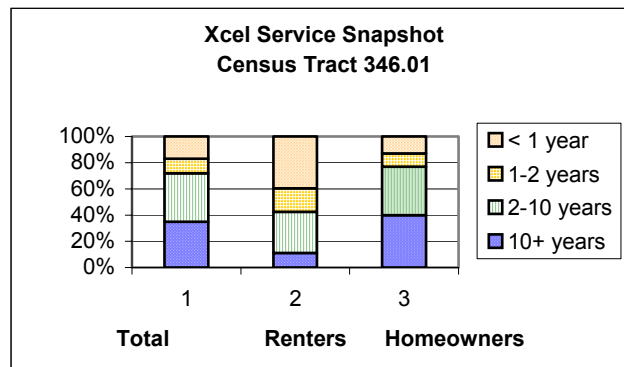
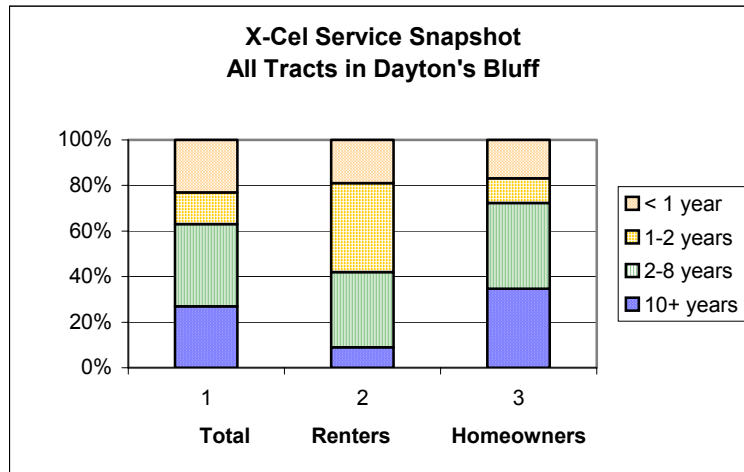




Results of the Xcel Electrical Service Snapshot:

The Xcel data used was a one-time snapshot taken in April 30, 2000 of electrical service for the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood. The information, broken down by census tracts, was to serve as a baseline that could be correlated with the four block door-to-door survey. A map of the census tracts in the district can be found in the appendix.

Duration of service/residence	Xcel Totals for DBluff	Conway	Euclid	Wilson	North
< 1 year	22	27	39	15	20
1-2 years	14	31	10	15	20
2-10 years	36	31	33	27	35
10+ years	27	12	18	19	25



Although there was some variability, duration of tenancy reflected similar patterns in the Xcel and door-to-door data. Not surprisingly the highest mobility rates occurred where there were larger numbers of multi-family units. In contrast to previously gathered data, the records revealed a much smaller number of duplexes in the Dayton's Bluff housing stock. There were 64 duplexes, 2,523 multifamily dwellings of three or more units and 5,802 single-family homes. The differences might result from the fact that some homes are rented and many duplexes and single-family homes have been divided into multiple units. Some homes and duplexes often have one meter. For the purposes of comparison, however, multi-family units were categorized as renters and single-family units as homeowners.

Limitations:

The primary constraint of this evaluation is its wide scope. Tracking students' progress in the school and neighborhood mobility as well as their effects on the community under the best circumstances would be a formidable and time-consuming task. In this evaluation, the assortment of data collection required for formative and summative evaluations was made more difficult by the transience of many of the participants. Most of the random sample of 30 people who have seen Mary Poe, HAPN's central organizer, at least one time do not have telephones, permanent residences or lasting jobs. Many people presently live in homeless shelters and outside the district. Often people have moved two or three times, since the first placement negotiated with HAPN. Better record keeping of addresses of placements would also make the follow up interviews easier. Additional information from the school was not accessible to study the links between student achievement and learning and mobility. Lastly, it was difficult to measure the effects of stabilization on families, schools and neighborhoods given the short time the program has been underway.

Implications:

Several themes emerged through the evaluation process. Tying community stability to the Dayton's Bluff Elementary School, a school with a high mobility, continues to be problematic. The disparity between the high costs of housing and wages as well as the decline of employment opportunities in the district additionally underscores the links between housing, education and employment. Finally, while the DBCSP originally focused on housing families and their transience, the surveys also raised issues of high landlord turnover and neglect, the availability of reasonably priced housing and acceptance of Section 8 vouchers.

Assumptions about who is the “good neighbor” or active community member did not follow stereotyped divisions between old versus new residents, homeowner versus renter and landlord versus tenant. In one area, three generations of residents have formed strong bonds through working and playing together. Several residents pooled resources and skills to help each other repair and remodel their homes. They recently had a go-cart race that brought together homeowners and renters on each end of the street. Finally, with the reduction in the availability of low-cost housing, many people have become forced to accept substandard housing. Housing quality must be a focus of school and housing stability programs, as well as affordability, segregation and availability.

Recommendations:

- Dealing with the "big" issues will require institutional support, coalitions, quasi-independent advocates and social service providers. DBCSP can provide leadership to pressure St. Paul officials and agencies to streamline the process of rehabbing and building quality and affordable homes. Part of this plan might mean investigating the administration and dynamics of the Section 8 housing voucher system. Some questions in this area include: How are decisions being made in the local disbursement of Section 8 vouchers? What agencies and organizations are involved? How do local rules and practices differ from federal goals? What kinds of decisions are being made such as eligibility guidelines, where people can locate and health and safety issues such as lead paint?
- By linking housing issues with the students at the DBES, the program's mission implicitly sets out to assist in setting the stage to further students' learning in the school. It soon came upon the St. Paul School District, known as 360 (its address on Colborne) and the Wilder Foundation, who had turf and interests to protect. Taking a different tact from the school voucher and charter school movement, I maintain that public community schools embody more closely two of the underpinning principles articulated in present school reform efforts. Community schools are neighborhood-based and managed by site-based teams. Both of these elements are necessary to carrying out the stated reformist goals of decentralization of authority and local autonomy in the schools. Instead of the magnet school system and compensatory services that have tended to foster educational inequality, the DBCSP can help to shape more effective “community” schools in practice.

- Many more people and groups need to be thinking about the issues and actions spurred by DBCSP. This includes large corporations, small businesses, alternative economic networks such as HOur Dollars and landlords. These groups have thus far played peripheral roles and need to be more involved at different levels and capacities. The landlord training initiated by the St. Paul Association of Responsible Landlords (SPARL) was a beginning. When Dayton's Bluff landlords were contacted for a "training," however, many responded that they had been in the business long enough and didn't need it. In this period when people with a little bit of knowledge and experience think they are experts, perhaps a better strategy calls this work on-going education and discussion sessions. This might entail forums generated from the work of DBCSP. Two excellent examples that already occurred last year were the Year One DBCSP Evaluation Forum held at Metro State University and several meetings about the DBES organized by the DB Community Council Board of Directors. For landlords, this may mean more meetings in court or with local block clubs. This report, on the other hand, questions the effectiveness of schools in carrying out their community development mission as well as the feasibility of the Advocacy Coalition Framework.
- There is a glaring need for reasonably priced housing to accommodate new residents and to offset deteriorating housing stock. According to the 2000 Census, there were 2,219 more people living in Dayton's Bluff District 4 representing a 14.4% increase from 1990. Housing prices were a major reason people in the study stayed or moved in this study. With a dwelling life averaging at sixty-five years, the stock surveyed was often too inferior for renovation to justify the high costs. Replacing old and deteriorating housing is further compounded by historic homes designation that translates into even more regulations and expense. As other studies have shown, "freezing" and buying deteriorating houses at inflated prices harms both the neighborhood's livability and economic prospects.
- Partnerships of varying capacities stretch budgets and contribute different skills and expertise. On the other hand, hybrid programs often impart contradictory messages and expectations. One person worked in three capacities. She was the housing organizer for Dayton's Bluff Community Council, housing provider for the Ramsey County Stabilization Project connected with Merrick

HAPN SURVEY 2001:

Date_____

Name_____

Present Address_____

Was housing obtained? When?

How long have you been at your present location?

How did Mary assist you in finding a place and/or to stay in DB? Ex. gave you a housing list, list of referrals, made phone calls to agencies, landlords.

Did you find a place on your own?

What changes have occurred – is it working out?

What things helped you in finding or staying in your present housing?
(Examples – Did it help to mediate disputes, problems with landlords or neighbors?
Help kids stay in school?)

What things are working in the program?

What things need to be addressed?

What do you need to help you keep your present housing? What kinds of things do you need to know/wish you knew to help you to be more self-sufficient?

Housing Placements for 2000:

